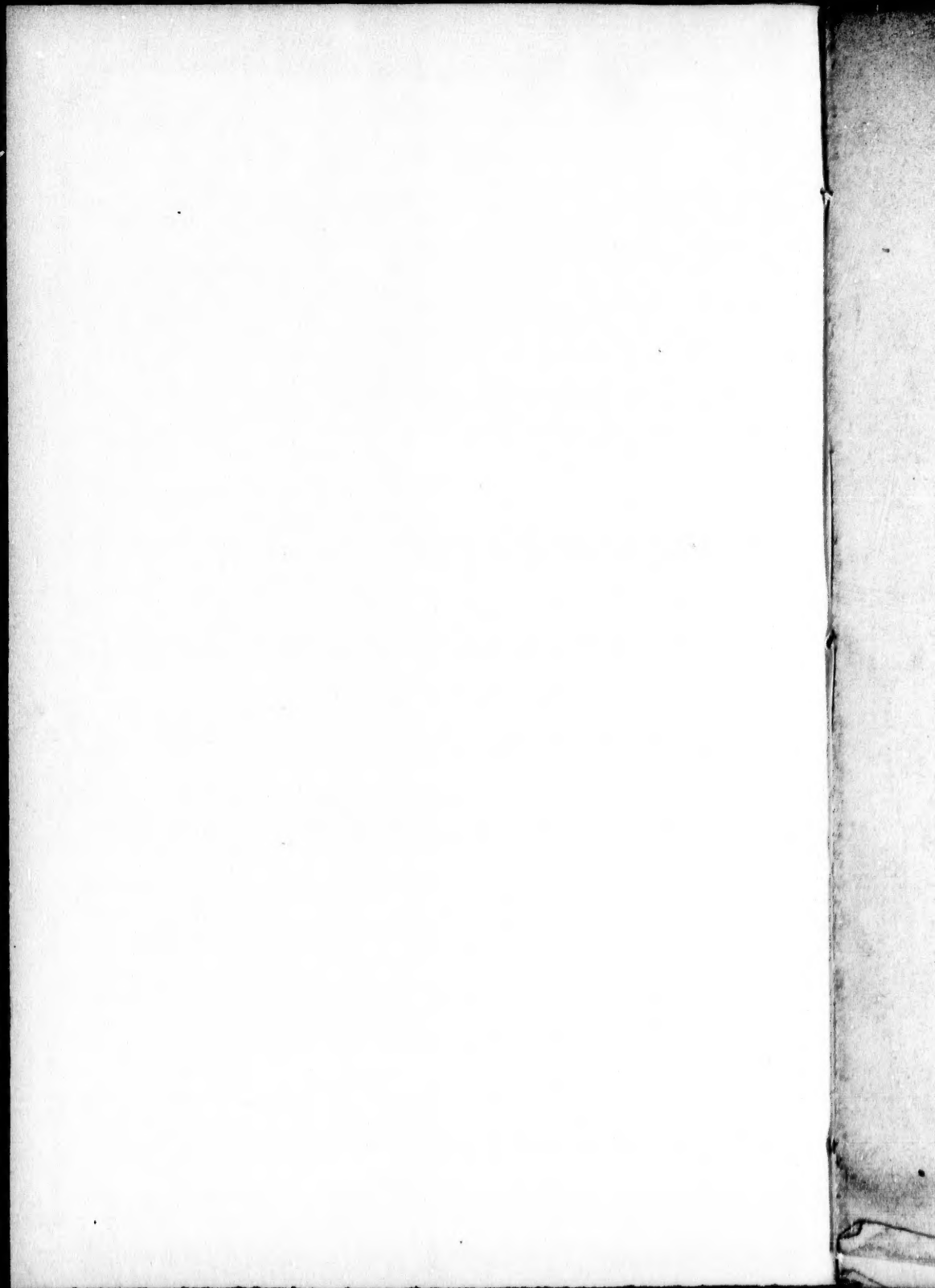




L. J. In Memoriam

LECTURE

**THE
NEW BRUNSWICK
MUSEUM**

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING

OF THE

MODEL AND NORMAL TRAINING SCHOOLS

AT FREDERICTON,

On Thursday the 10th day of February,

1848,

Joseph Marshall
By MR. M. d'AVRAY,

DIRECTOR OF THOSE ESTABLISHMENTS.

Dedicated to the Teachers of the Province of New Brunswick.

Fredericton:

J. SIMPSON, PRINTER TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

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ON THURSDAY THE 15TH DAY OF FEBRUARY

1842

BY MR. M. C. LAYMAN

OFFICER OF THESE ESTABLISHMENTS

LECTURED TO THE TEACHERS OF THE TEACHERS OF NEW BRUNSWICK

PRINTED BY

JOHN W. BARNES, NEW BRUNSWICK

1842

Education is to the mind of Man what Cultivation is to the Earth; for as good lands are rendered more fruitful, and as poor lands are improved by skilful culture, so by Education does natural talent shine forth in all its brilliancy, and humble mediocrity learn to display its solid and intrinsic worth.

So much has been written on the subject of Education by men of the very highest talent—the pens of its ablest advocates have been so repeatedly and so well employed in its cause, that it would be presumptuous in me to hope to say anything new on the present occasion. I feel that in treating a matter so deeply interesting to all, I could but repeat what has already been much better said, and I shall, therefore, with your permission, chiefly confine myself in this Address to the explanation of the principles upon which I propose to conduct the Establishment which has been entrusted to my care, and I will endeavour to do this as clearly, and yet as concisely as possible, so that all may understand what benefits are expected to accrue to the community at large from the Normal School at Fredericton.

It will readily be acknowledged that the best way of doing a thing, should always be the method employed to do it. Now in Education, more particularly than in anything else, it is essentially necessary that the best way of imparting instruction should be universally adopted and followed; that a system having been fixed upon as the best calculated to attain this end, it should become the system in general use; and it is with this view that the Normal Training School at Fredericton has been established, in order that the Masters and Teachers of the various Schools throughout the Province, may, by attending it during a certain period, receive such hints and instructions in the Art of Teaching, as shall gradually and progressively, but most effectually, bring one systematic method of instruction into general operation.

In order to facilitate the acquirement of this system by the Teachers, a Model School will be connected with the Training School, so as to afford them daily and hourly opportunities of practising the art of imparting instruction—an art, without which all the knowledge of the Teacher will be as nothing, and the possession of which will render a man of but humble attainments a most useful Instructor.

21 This then will be the chief object and the principle aim of the Training School; to qualify the Teachers upon their return to the scene of their labours, to introduce into their Schools such a system

of Elementary Instruction as may best forward the advancement of their Pupils, so that though they may teach but little, they shall teach that little well.

The greater part of them will, from the locality of their Schools, have only such Pupils as cannot devote any very long period to the prosecution of their studies; and it is, therefore, imperatively necessary that the system adopted be the best calculated to impart really useful knowledge to them during the short time that they will remain under tuition. By really useful knowledge, I mean that sort of instruction which will be of daily service to them through life in their present sphere, and which at the same time may serve as a stepping stone to the acquirement of further instruction, whenever their inclination prompts them, or their circumstances enable them to seek it.

In order to effect this, I would recommend the Teachers to confine themselves to imparting the following branches only, viz: Reading, Orthography, Arithmetic, Writing, Grammar, and Geography. I would have the Pupils read fluently and well, and with such perfect intonation and due emphasis, as should prove that they understand what they read. I would have them so perfect in Orthography as to be able to write from dictation without any error, either in spelling or in punctuation.

In Arithmetic, I should wish them to understand, most thoroughly, the first four Rules; to be able to work without difficulty, hesitation, or mistake, any question in Proportion or in Practice; to make out Bills of Parcels; and to solve, mentally, any short sum that might be proposed to them.

Their Writing I would have exceedingly neat, clear, and bold; and their knowledge of Grammar such as to enable them to speak and write correctly.

In Geography, I would limit their instruction to a general acquaintance with the figure of the Earth; with the position of the various Countries, and with the names of their respective Capitals; with the names and positions of the principal Islands, Seas, Rivers, etc.; and I would for this purpose like them to be daily drilled before the Map, so that every boy should, as it were, carry the Map of the World in his mind's eye, and be enabled in an instant to reply correctly to any question that might be put to him; and this is, for the present, the full amount of the instruction which I am anxious to see thoroughly possessed by every member of the community.

Mere theorists in Education may, perhaps, be disposed to think that I have adopted too narrow a scale, and that it would be easy to

effect far more than this; but when we consider the actual state of Education at this time, and the actual position of the greater part of the inhabitants of most countries, I think that we shall have effected a great deal if we can successfully accomplish the little which I have proposed. How far are we from obtaining any such general result in the Mother Country! Let a labouring man in England be asked a very simple question in Arithmetic—the very simplest in Grammar or in Geography—he will reply that he does not understand you. How few among them can read their Bibles or can scrawl their names! How few of those who can write, know anything of Orthography! And shall we be thought to have effected too little, if we succeed in raising the Inhabitants of this Province as far above them in intellectual acquirements, as they are superior to them in social position? I think not. The days are indeed forever gone in which the Education of the people was thought to be a matter of no importance; but in our present anxiety to impart instruction, we must be very careful lest in endeavouring to do too much, we effect too little. We must begin at the beginning; we must creep before we can run; and by doing a little well, rather than a great deal imperfectly, we shall, I conceive, best and most speedily attain the object in view.

The Model School at Fredericton will be conducted entirely upon this principle. It is not intended as a rival to any existing establishment in the City, nor will it profess to impart anything like a scientific Education to the Pupils. The chief object of it is, that in connection with the Normal School, it may serve as a Training School for the Teachers learning the Art of Teaching; and to effect this, it will be divided into Classes; and beginning with the very lowest branches of Primary Education, it will enable the Pupils to pursue a course of Elementary Instruction such as I have above described. The Model School of Fredericton must necessarily, if it is to deserve that name, and to serve as the Model for the Training Schools in the several Counties, and for the other Parish Schools in the Province, be conducted precisely upon the system which it is desirable to bring into general operation, and it must consequently afford the Teachers just such a variety and such a succession of Classes as they will themselves have to direct.

But although I assume this as the basis of the System of Education which is to be brought into *immediate operation* throughout the Province, I am very far from wishing it to be restrained within those limits—or indeed within any limits. My desire is, that the Teachers should distinctly understand that their first and principal duty will be to lay a solid foundation of Elementary Instruction, and that if they do this well they will have discharged their duty to the entire satisfaction of the Legislature; but at the same time,

every encouragement will be afforded to those who may *hereafter* carry instruction beyond those limits; provided always, that the solid and essential shall, in no instance, be sacrificed to the brilliant, and that the Pupils shall be most thoroughly grounded in all the lower branches before they are suffered to proceed to the higher ones. A fact which will be ascertained by a searching examination at the periodical Inspections.

After providing competent Teachers for the various Districts of the Province, it appears to me that the object most in importance is, to excite in the minds of parents a sufficient interest in the education of their children, to make them grasp eagerly at the advantages thus placed within their reach. At present there is no inducement of this kind offered to parents sufficiently tangible and direct to induce them to make any sacrifices, or even any continued exertions for so desirable an object; they send their children to School, but suffer their attendance to be interrupted by the slightest impediment that may offer, and think that they have done enough for the improvement of their minds, by giving them the name of an Education, though the substance be entirely wanting, through their own indifference; an indifference which is the more to be wondered at when we remember, that in this Country, the blessings of Education offer, even to the humblest individual, every prospect of emancipating himself from the narrow and restricted circle of action in which he is born, provided his natural talents be such as to enable him to profit by the opportunities which are afforded for their cultivation.

I shall now proceed to point out what occurs to me as the most forcible method for dispelling this apathy, and for removing this indifference; and although I am obliged to confess, that upon the most economical scale which can be adopted, it will involve some extra expense, yet I feel assured, that not only will no portion of the Public Funds, appropriated to the cause of Education, be more usefully employed, but that this comparatively trifling addition will increase the efficacy of what has been already so liberally applied to this most important purpose, one hundred fold.

The plan I would recommend is that of fostering superior talent, wherever it may be found among the juvenile population, by opening for it a path from the lowest to the highest of our Educational Establishments, by means of exhibitions from Schools of one grade to those of a higher; such exhibitions being not merely honorary, but of such a pecuniary value as would enable the successful Scholar to avail himself of the advantages they offer. Thus, for example, supposing each County to contain, on an average, 80 Common Schools, and one Grammar School, I would propose that each Grammar School should be endowed with two exhibitions for two years,

to be competed for by Candidates presenting themselves from the Parish Schools of the County; that such competitions should take place at each yearly visit of the General School Inspector, whose duty it would be to examine the Candidates brought forward by the respective Masters in each of the respective Schools, and to report the names of the successful competitors in each County, before he proceeded to the next.

I would further suggest, that four other exhibitions for three years should be attached to the High Schools of the Province—one to the Collegiate School, and one to the Baptist Seminary at Fredericton—one to the Grammar School at Saint John, and one to the Wesleyan Academy at Sackville; to be competed for, as they fall due, by Candidates from the various County Grammar Schools. This endowment would, with the addition of some small contribution from their parents, according to their means, constantly keep four Scholars in the enjoyment of facilities for cultivating their talents, while a small additional Grant would furnish an annual exhibition, of three years duration, in King's College; by means of which, a clear way would be thrown open to the humblest individual, possessed of the requisite talents, to attain the highest literary eminence in the Province.

The benefits which would result from such a plan as I have proposed, would be very great, and by no means confined to the parties availing themselves of the exhibition. Although, even were they thus limited, the expenditure would not have been made in vain; for it is certain, that a never ceasing stimulus would thus be furnished to the Teachers of all classes, as each would be ambitious to number among his own Pupils as many of the successful candidates for these honours and emoluments as possible, whilst much more zeal would actually be evinced both by the parents and by their children in their efforts to obtain such a standing in the Schools to which the latter belong, as would give them a chance of promotion.

I have no hesitation in asserting that the increase of energy and activity that would be thus infused into the Schools throughout the Province, would be productive of immense benefit to the cause of Education. Its blessings, which formerly fell only to the share of the few, would be placed within the reach of all who choose to seek for them. The gates of the Temple of Knowledge, which once opened with so much difficulty to the studious but favoured Scholar, would be thrown back wide upon their hinges that all might enter; and the waters of the Fountain of Wisdom, of which in other days a few pale Students alone were seen to sip, would now be quaffed in deep draughts by any and by all who thirsted for them.

Having thus detailed the views which I entertain as to the course by which I think it would be wisest and most advantageous to commence the great work of systematic instruction, and those which appear to me best calculated to further the great cause of Education, I shall conclude with expressing a fervent hope that they will be so fortunate as to meet with the approbation of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and Council, and with that of the Members of the Legislature of the Province.

I sincerely trust that my anxiety to commence operations with the essentially necessary only, will not be mistaken for an apathetic disregard of the advantages of a more extended Education, and that I shall be understood to have adopted a limited scale of instruction, merely from feeling an intimate conviction that it is the best adapted to the present urgent wants of the community, and the best calculated to effect the objects which the Legislature had in view, when the formation of the Normal and Model Schools was resolved.

To the Teachers I would address a few words on the very great importance of the duties which they will have to discharge. Theirs, which is no common task in any Country, will be a very arduous one in this Province, if they faithfully and conscientiously follow out the plan which I have traced for their guidance. Elementary Instruction is, of all others, the most wearisome and the most uninteresting ; and this is, probably, the reason why it has hitherto been left in the hands of persons who were rarely competent to impart it ; but the real value—I may say the absolute necessity—the vital importance of a well laid and truly solid foundation, is now universally acknowledged. The early instruction of the young is no longer entrusted to the ignorant, and in many ways, incompetent persons, who formerly conducted our Elementary Schools. Men of first rate abilities do not now disdain to bend the tree into the position in which they wish it to grow, and they find their reward in the important fact, that they are by this means spared the ungrateful labour which formerly but too often fell to their lot, I mean the fatiguing process by which the Pupil was made to *unlearn* all that he had previously so painfully, but alas, so fruitlessly acquired. They are now thoroughly convinced that the safety of the superstructure mainly depends on the early and skilful construction of the base, and this point now engages their attention in proportion to the facility which they find it affords to their future labours.

Let then the Teachers of this Province undertake these onerous duties with a due sense of their importance ; let them bear in mind that to their diligence, to their zeal and attention, are confided the well being and future success of the rising generation, and above

all, that it is *to* them that the Pupils will look up for examples of good moral conduct, and *from* them that they will receive those early impressions, which, as they are good or bad, will so materially influence their success in life.

It has been said, it is indeed daily repeated, that there is no royal road to learning; but a little reflection will convince us that the broad path of skilful and judicious instruction, which, avoiding all the narrow bye ways that so often mislead the unwary Student, conducts him by a gentle ascent to the point which he wishes to reach, is indeed, a royal road, and it is along this road which the benevolent kindness and liberality of the Legislature have opened to all, that I wish to see the Teachers conduct their Pupils.

In terminating this portion of my Address, I would solicit their attention to the words of an eminent writer on Education.

"Education" says he "has very many and very important ends to accomplish—it is desirable that the Pupil should be taught thoroughly; that is, that he should have as exact and definite a knowledge as possible."

"It is desirable that he be taught permanently; that is, that the truth communicated be so associated with his other knowledge, that the lapse of time will not easily erase it from his memory. It is important also, that no more time be consumed in the process than is absolutely necessary; he who occupies two years in teaching what might be as well taught, with a little more industry, in one year, does his Pupil a far greater injury than would be done by simply abridging his life by a year; he not only abstracts from his Pupil's acquisition, that year's improvement, but all the knowledge which would have been the fruit of it, for the remainder of his being."

It will be found that the secret of teaching most thoroughly, permanently, and in the shortest time, that is, of giving to the Pupil in a given time the greatest amount of knowledge, consists in so teaching as to give the most active exercise to the faculties of the mind.

Let the Pupil understand everything that it is designed to teach him; if he cannot understand a thing this year, it was not designed by his Creator that he should learn it this year; but let it not be forgotten that precisely here is seen the power of the skilful Teacher; it is his business to make a Pupil, if possible, understand. Very few things are incapable of being understood, if they be reduced to their simplest elements; hence the reason why the power of accurate analysis is so invaluable in a Teacher; by simplification and patience it is astonishing to observe how easily abstruse subjects may be brought within the grasp of even the faculties of children; let a Teacher then first understand a subject himself—

let him know that he understands it; let him reduce it to its simplest form; and then let him see that his pupil understands it also. I would further recommend the frequent repetition of whatever has been acquired; for want of this an almost incalculable amount of valuable time is annually wasted. Who of us has not forgotten far more than he at present knows! What is understood to-day may with pleasure be reviewed to-morrow. If it be frequently reviewed, it will be associated with all our other knowledge, and be thoroughly engraven on the memory; if it be laid aside for a month or two, it will be almost as difficult to recover it as to acquire a new truth. If this be the case with us generally, I need not say how peculiarly the remark applies to the young; but above all, let me insist upon the importance of universal practice of everything that is learned. No matter whether it be a Rule in Arithmetic or a Rule in Grammar; as soon as it is learned and understood, let it be practised. Let exercise be so devised, as to make the Pupil familiar with its application; let him construct exercises himself; let him not leave them until he feels that he understands both the law and its application, and is able to make use of it freely and without assistance. The mind will never derive power in any other way, nor will it in any other way attain to the dignity of certain and practical and available science.

The business of the Teacher then, is, so to communicate knowledge, as most constantly and vigorously to exercise the original faculties of the mind. In this manner, he will both convey the greatest amount of instruction, and create the largest amount of mental power. We are, as it were, the pioneers of this work in this Country—let us by all the means in our power second the efforts and the wishes of the public.

There is one more point on which I must particularly insist; I allude to the fitness or unfitness of the Teacher for the task which he has undertaken. This is a most important consideration, and one which I shall feel bound to select as a test of the rank which the Teacher is to obtain. I have already remarked, I now emphatically repeat, that I shall not consider superior attainments as sufficient of themselves to entitle a candidate to his certificate as a first Class Teacher. These certificates will be granted with the utmost caution, and to those candidates only, who shall have fully proved their perfect fitness for the duties which will devolve upon them—their qualifications as judicious imparters of instruction, and as strict, but mild and temperate disciplinarians.

It now only remains for me to return my grateful thanks to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, for the very cordial support which I have received from him in this the outset of my arduous undertaking. I have also great pleasure in acknowledging the

friendly co-operation of those Members of the Council and of the Legislature, to whom I have had the honour of communicating my views; and as I trust that the whole of them will do me the justice to believe that in forming the plan which I wish to follow. I have been actuated solely by my anxious desire to carry out their intentions in the most efficacious manner possible, so do I hope, that relying on my zeal and assiduity, they will not refuse to lighten my labours by the pleasing consciousness that I am favoured with their approbation.

I trust that I shall have an early opportunity of visiting most of these Gentlemen in their respective Counties, and they may rest assured, that no effort shall be wanting on my part to secure to their Schools all the advantages which can result from an improved and well conducted system of Education.*

The operations of the Model School will commence this afternoon, and I shall feel very great pleasure in receiving any Gentlemen who may favour us with a visit; and also in affording any additional information which it may be in my power to supply.

* I here allude to those visits of Inspection to the various County Training Schools, which will, I think, be essentially necessary to their proper management, and which it will, I conceive, be a part of my duty to pay, in order that the System may be effectually carried out.